



Billing Code 3410-10

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability: Inviting Applications for the Market Access Program

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2016 Market Access Program (MAP). The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from eligible applicants for fiscal year 2016 and to set out criteria for the award of funds under the program in October 2015. The MAP is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, [insert 60 calendar days after publication date]. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service *by courier address:* Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone:* (202) 720-4327, or *by fax:* (202) 720-9361, or *by e-mail:*

uesadmin@fas.usda.gov. Information is also available on the FAS Web site at

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/market-access-program-map>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Funding Opportunity Description

Announcement Type: New.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.601

Authority: The MAP is authorized under Section 203 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended. MAP regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1485.

Purpose: The MAP is designed to create, expand, and maintain foreign markets for U. S. agricultural commodities and products through cost-share assistance. Financial assistance under the MAP will be made available on a competitive basis, and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein and in the MAP regulations. All U.S. agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration.

FAS allocates funds in a manner that effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets, FAS considers whether the applicant provides a clear, long-term agricultural trade strategy and a program effectiveness time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. FAS also considers the extent to which a proposed project targets markets with the greatest growth potential. These factors are part of the FAS resource allocation strategy to fund applicants who can demonstrate performance and address the objectives of the GPRA.

B. Award Information

Under the MAP, and subject to the availability of funding, the CCC enters into agreements with eligible Participants to share the cost of certain overseas marketing and promotion activities. MAP Participants may receive assistance for generic or brand promotion activities. For generic activities, funding priority is given to organizations that have the broadest possible producer representation of the commodity being promoted and that are nationwide in membership and scope.

Only non-profit U.S. agricultural trade organizations, nonprofit state regional trade groups (SRTGs), U.S. agricultural cooperatives, and State government agencies can participate directly in the brand program. The MAP generally operates on a reimbursement basis.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: To participate in the MAP, an applicant must be a nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization, a nonprofit SRTG, a U.S. agricultural cooperative, or a State government agency. A small-sized U.S. commercial entity may participate through a MAP Participant.

2. Cost Sharing: To participate in the MAP, an applicant must agree to contribute resources to its proposed promotional activities. The MAP is intended to supplement, not supplant, the efforts of the U.S. private sector. In the case of generic promotion, the contribution must be at least 10 percent of the value of resources provided by CCC for such generic promotion. In the case of brand promotion, the contribution must be at least 50 percent of the total cost of such brand promotion.

The degree of commitment of an applicant to the promotional strategies contained in its application, as represented by the agreed cost-share contributions specified therein, is considered by FAS when determining which applications will be approved for funding. Cost-share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions, such as professional staff time spent on design and execution of activities. The MAP regulations, in section 1485.16, provide detailed discussion of eligible and ineligible cost-share contributions.

3. Other: Applications should include a justification for funding assistance from the program – an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without federal funding

assistance, and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: Organizations are encouraged to submit their MAP applications to FAS through the Unified Export Strategy (UES) application Internet Web site. The UES allows interested applicants to submit a single consolidated and strategically coordinated proposal that incorporates requests for funding and recommendations for virtually all of the FAS marketing programs, financial assistance programs, and market access programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade that they face, identify activities that would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals. Applicants planning to use the Internet-based system must contact the FAS/Program Operations Division to obtain Web site access information. The Internet-based application may be found at the following URL address: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/ues/webapp/>.

FAS highly recommends applying via the Internet-based application, as this format virtually eliminates paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle. However, applicants also have the option of submitting an electronic version of their application to FAS at uesadmin@fas.usda.gov.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission: To be considered for the MAP, an applicant must submit to FAS information required by the MAP regulations in section 1485.13.

In addition, in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25, each entity that applies to MAP and does not qualify for an exemption under 2 CFR §25.110 must:

- (i) Provide a valid DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to CCC;
- (ii) Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application or plan; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by CCC.

Similarly, in accordance with 2 CFR Part 170, each entity that applies to MAP and does not qualify for an exception under 2 CFR §170.110(b) must ensure it has the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the applicable reporting requirements of 2 CFR Part 170 should it receive MAP funding.

Incomplete applications and applications that do not otherwise conform to this announcement and the MAP regulations will not be accepted for review.

FAS administers various other agricultural export assistance programs including the Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) program, the Emerging Markets Program, the Quality Samples Program, and the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program. Any organization that is not interested in applying for the MAP, but would like to request assistance through one of the other programs mentioned should contact the Program Operations Division.

3. Submission Dates and Times: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, [insert 60 calendar days after publication date]. All MAP applicants, regardless of the method of submitting an application, must also submit by the application deadline, an original signed certification statement as specified in 7 CFR 1485.13(a)(2)(i)(E) to the Program Operations

Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250. Applications or certifications received after this date will not be considered.

4. Funding Restrictions: Certain types of expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by the program, and there are limits on other categories of expenses. CCC also will not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to approval. Full details are available in the MAP regulations in section 1485.17.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria and Review Process: Following is a description of the FAS process for reviewing applications and the criteria for allocating available MAP funds.

(1) Phase 1--Sufficiency Review and FAS Divisional Review:

Applications received by the closing date will be reviewed by FAS to determine the eligibility of the applicants and the completeness of the applications. These requirements appear in sections 1485.12 and 1485.13 of the MAP regulations. Applications that meet the requirements then will be further evaluated by the appropriate Commodity Branch office of the FAS/Cooperator Programs Division. The Commodity Branch will review each application against the criteria listed in section 1485.14(b) and (c) of the MAP regulations as well as in this Notice. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals and to recommend an appropriate funding level for each application based upon these criteria.

(2) Phase 2--Competitive Review:

Meritorious applications then will be passed on to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Office of Trade Programs, for the purpose of allocating available funds among the applicants.

Applicants will compete for funds on the basis of the following allocation criteria as applicable (the number in parentheses represents a percentage weight factor):

(a) Applicant's Contribution Level (40)

- The applicant's 4-year average share (2013-2016) of all contributions under the MAP (cash and goods and services provided by U.S. entities in support of overseas marketing and promotion activities) compared to;

- The applicant's 4-year average share (2013-2016) of the funding level for all MAP Participants.

(b) Past Performance (30)

- The 3-year average share (2012-2014) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to;

- The applicant's 2-year average share (2014-2015) of the funding level for all MAP Participants plus, for those groups participating in the Cooperator program, the 2-year average share (2014-2015) of all Cooperator program budgets.

(c) Projected Export Goals (15)

- The total dollar value of projected exports promoted by the applicant for 2016 compared to;
- The applicant's requested funding level;

(d) Accuracy of Past Projections (15)

- Actual exports for 2014 as reported in the 2016 MAP application compared to;
- Past projections of exports for 2014 as specified in the 2014 MAP application.

The Commodity Branches' recommended funding levels for each applicant are converted to percentages of the total MAP funds available and then multiplied by each weight factor as described above to determine the amount of funds allocated to each applicant.

2. *Anticipated Announcement Date:* Announcements of funding decisions for the MAP are anticipated during October 2015.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* FAS will notify each applicant in writing of the final disposition of its application. The FAS will send an approval letter and program agreement to each approved applicant. The approval letter and program agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the levels of MAP funding and cost-share contribution requirements.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* Interested parties should review the MAP regulations, which are available at the following URL address:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/market-access-program-map>. Hard copies may be obtained by contacting the Program Operations Division.

3. *Reporting:* FAS requires various reports and evaluations from MAP Participants. Reporting requirements are detailed in the MAP regulations in section 1485.22 and 1485.23.

G. Federal Agency Contact(s)

For additional information and assistance, contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Courier address: Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone:* (202) 720-4327, or *by fax:* (202) 720-9361, or *by e-mail:* uesadmin@fas.usda.gov.

Signed at Washington, DC on the _1 st____ of _April_____, 2015.

Asif Chaudhry,
Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, and

Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

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